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Subject: Imports to Feed U. S. Livestock

Field distribution: War Board members, Extension Editors, AAA committeemen, SCS Regional Information Chiefs, FDA Regional Marketing Reports Chiefs, BAE Regional Analysts, FSA Regional Information Chiefs, FCA Information Agents.

Suggested use: Background material.

American farmers have on hand an all-time record number of poultry and livestock. To provide enough feed for their flocks and herds, they are drawing on big reserves of grain stored up in recent years in the Ever-Normal Granary. They are taking advantage of revised AAA practices to grow more corn and other feed crops. They are feeding revised mixed feed formulas to make proteins go further.

Still, many farmers are short of feed.

To help make up for the shortage, the Government and private concerns are importing every pound of protein they can get from other countries. They are bringing in all grain that available boats and railroad cars can carry.

Feed Import Program--in Brief.

This is the feed import story, in brief;

FEEDS IMPORTED.....Main feeds imported include;

Wheat, oats, and barley--largely from Canada.
Animal proteins from Latin American countries,
Australia, and New Zealand.

Cottonseed meal from Latin America.

OTHER STEPS.....Additional feed is being made available to American farmers through such steps as (a) imports of molasses for alcohol to release millions of bushels of grain for livestock, (b) movement of corn from Cuba to Central American and Caribbean countries to release for our livestock U. S. corn which otherwise would need to be shipped to those countries.

GENERAL POLICIES.....Agreements have been made with various countries to increase production of certain crops, including feed crops. But care is taken to avoid stripping those countries of feed they would have to replace with other imports. Such cross hauling merely would tie up shipping of United Nations and other friendly countries.

EFFECT OF IMPORTS....Feed imports into U.S. (although representing only a small percentage of total U.S. feed supplies) are highly important because the feed comes into coastal and other areas where feed shortage is most acute.

LIMITATIONS.....In spite of large supplies of feed at home, and imports, farmers in some areas won't have enough feed to feed present number of livestock and poultry at the usual rates.

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IMPORTS OF GRAIN

For some time, the Commodity Credit Corporation has been selling from its holdings of lower quality wheat, about 50 million bushels of wheat a month for feed. It would be desirable to continue to provide wheat at about this volume. But at the present rate of sale, these stocks will be exhausted in a few months.

By far the best opportunity to obtain grain to take the place, at least in part, of these Government stocks is to import wheat and other grains from Canada.

Already, our Government and private concerns have brought in a good many million bushels of Canadian grain.

The Commodity Credit Corporation has bought 10 million bushels of wheat to come into the Northeast...Another 8 million bushels to move into the Middle Atlantic and Southeastern States...Another 2 million bushels for the Rocky Mountain area and California.

In the past few months, private concerns have brought 4 to 8 million bushels of Canadian oats and barley a month down through the Lakes into the Northeast. In view of the present shortage of corn, Northeastern farmers need these oats and barley to mix with wheat to improve the feeding quality of wheat.

Wheat Import Prospects

In addition to the grain already imported, Canada has 400 million bushels of wheat theoretically available to the United States for feed. That allows for enough wheat to take care of Canada's own domestic and export needs, plus a reserve of 100 to 150 million bushels to carry over until next year. But much of this wheat is still on farms and is not readily available.

At present feed wheat prices, United States farmers probably would take around 50 to 60 million bushels a month of Canada's wheat, if available; they probably could use her entire reserve. Actually, not nearly that much can be brought in, mainly because of transportation bottlenecks. Also, because a demand for any such amounts probably would boost prices substantially. Unless additional transportation facilities are made available, it seems that about the most that can be expected is 10 to 15 million bushels a month of Canadian wheat.

Steps to Aid Transportation

Transportation bottlenecks occur both in rail facilities and Great Lake and ocean shipping.

The U. S. railroads are carrying about all they can carry--with military requirements growing every month. To import more than around 10 or 15 million bushels of wheat a month, would require material changes in rail transportation policies.

As an indication of what has been done to increase Great Lake movements, 10 small coal boats have been returned to the Lakes from ocean trade. Four boats have been brought up from New Orleans. Five coastal boats built for British trade have been kept on the Lakes. In short, everything feasible is being done to move more grain on the Great Lakes.

In addition, 50 thousand tons of wheat, and 12 thousand tons of barley are being purchased from Argentina--and will be brought into Gulf and Atlantic Coast ports as soon as shipping space is available.

Besides those definite programs to bring in grain, Government agencies are constantly on the alert for any opportunities to bring in additional supplies. For example, boats that carried supplies to Churchill, Canada, on Hudson Bay, are bringing back 600 thousand bushels of wheat to New York and Baltimore.

Imports in Relation to Domestic Supplies

Total grain imports for the 1943-44 feeding year may amount to between 200 and 300 million bushels.

That isn't much grain in terms of the total used in this country. It amounts to less than 5 percent of all grain and by-product feeds that are fed in the country as a whole. But it makes an important contribution to supplies in the deficit areas on the East and West coasts, and in the Southeast.

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IMPORTS OF PROTEINS

In time, we may be as short of grains as we are of proteins--if not shorter. But the large reserves of grains in the Ever-Normal Granary have enabled farmers to make adjustments on grain feeds more gradually. A shortage of proteins is felt more quickly.

During the coming feeding season, the United States may have about as much protein per animal unit as the average for the five years, 1937-41. For 1943-44, however, supplies may be about 7 percent less per animal unit than for 1942-43.

To supplement domestic supplies of proteins for our poultry flocks and pigs, we are drawing on all available proteins from widely scattered points of the world.

Animal Protein Imports Up

Imports of animal proteins rank next in importance to imports of Canadian grain.

A wide variety of animal products--tankage, liver meal, etc.--are being brought in from Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, and also some from Australia, New Zealand, and Cuba.

At present, with the improvement in the shipping situation, Government agencies allot enough shipping space to bring in all animal protein products that are available.

Assuming no interruption in shipping, it is estimated that around 60 to 70 thousand tons of animal proteins will be imported this year.

Imports of dry rendered tankages will run higher than in some normal pre-war years; they may make up 10 percent of total supplies. The tankage is made into meat scrap, chiefly for poultry in areas that need it most.

Imports of liver meal may be larger than ever before. The liver meal, again, is used largely in poultry feed. It is high in riboflavin, and is used mainly in starting and growing mashes for poultry.

Imports of Vegetable Proteins

This year, about 50 thousand tons of cottonseed meal have been purchased for import. This meal comes mainly from Brazil, with some from the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean areas. Again, these imports are only a small part of total supplies, but they are important to farmers in the North Atlantic area.

Considerable amounts of flaxseed are being brought in from Argentina in particular, as well as from other countries. Enough flaxseed has come in to keep crushers in this country going at full capacity pending the harvesting of our own crop.

Large amounts of castor beans are being brought in from Brazil, and also Mexico and Central America. The meal makes a good fertilizer and releases more cottonseed meal for feed.

Peanuts are being brought in from South America, Mexico, and various Caribbean areas. Small amounts of soybean meal are coming in from the Dominican Republic. Rape and sesame seed are also adding to supplies of vegetable proteins. Sesame meal is a fine protein supplement for chickens and cattle.

When the Japanese took over the Philippines they shut off our main supply of copra meal--which is made from dried coconut meat. But some copra is being brought into this country from Ceylon and French Oceania. This copra formerly went to France and England, but is now being diverted to our East and West Coasts under United Nations agreements to share materials. Copra is used as protein supplement for poultry and dairy cattle.

In spite of shipping difficulties, imports of vegetable proteins are about as big as ever.

OTHER STEPS TO SUPPLEMENT FEED

Besides the grain and proteins being brought in from various parts of the globe, Government agencies are watching for every opportunity to make a larger proportion of domestic crops available for livestock feed.

Molasses for Alcohol Saves Grain

Substitution of Cuban and Puerto Rican molasses for grain in making alcohol offers a good example of how grain is being saved for livestock.

A number of distilleries along the East Coast are prepared to re-convert from the use of grain to molasses.

The use of about 20 million gallons of molasses a month for these distilleries would release about 18 million bushels of wheat. The addition of this much grain would make an important contribution to our feed supplies.

Less Corn Exported

As another example of steps to relieve the demand on American feed supplies, our Government is aiding in the movement of corn from Cuba and the Dominican Republic into neighboring Caribbean and Central American countries. This corn will take the place of corn that otherwise would need to be shipped to those countries from the United States.

The Cuban corn deal also is an excellent example of the way the United Nations and other friendly nations are cooperating to save shipping space. Corn can be moved from Cuba to neighboring points much easier than from our Corn Belt. This plan releases railroad cars and boats for other essential transportation.

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COOPERATION OF FRIENDLY NATIONS

In feeding our huge numbers of livestock and poultry, Government agencies are exploring all possibilities of obtaining more feed from other countries just as intensively as we are exploring our own resources.

Stimulate Feed Production

Representatives of our Government are looking into the possibilities of stepping up production of certain food and feed crops all the way from Canada and Mexico to South America, Africa, and the South Pacific. They are taking the greatest possible advantage of the natural resources--the soil, climate, and manpower--of all friendly nations. In most places where surveys show that a country can expand some desirable commodity, all it needs to go ahead is assurance of a profitable market. Sometimes it may be furnished a little seed, and perhaps some help in grading.

Canada was encouraged to expand production of feed grains through an understanding that Canada would give special emphasis to expansion of feed grain crops while the United States would increase oil crops.

Brazil and some other countries have indicated their willingness to grow more beans and peanuts.

In encouraging these countries to shift to feed and other crops for shipment to the United States and other United Nations, care is being taken to avoid abrupt changes that will dislocate their agriculture and cause difficulties after the war.

Avoid Stripping Countries

An important consideration in obtaining more feed from other countries for our own use is to avoid stripping those countries of feed they need for their own farmers or for regular customers. It often would mean waste of shipping space to haul feed out of those countries only to have to ship other products back to take care of their home needs.

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FEED PROSPECTS

The imports of grains and proteins---although representing only a small percentage of total U. S. feed supplies---are highly important to farmers in the coastal and other areas where feed supplies are short. But, even with the imports, plus efforts to grow more feed at home, we will continue to have trouble providing feed for our record high number of livestock.

This is the feed situation in brief---

In 1943, we used eight percent more feed for each unit of livestock and poultry products than for several previous years. By using our feed as efficiently as we did prior to 1943, we should have enough feed to maintain or slightly increase milk production....maintain egg production at the 1943 level...feed out 15 to 20 percent more cattle to weights slightly below average and to good grades rather than choice and prime grades...feed out the 1943 spring and fall pig crops to average weights...start a spring pig crop equal to that of 1942....raise as many broilers as in 1942, and about as many turkeys and ducks as in 1943...and feed out the same number of sheep and lambs as in 1943. Those plans call for as much reliance as possible on roughage and pasture for beef cattle, sheep, and lambs, and to a lesser extent for dairy cattle.

It will take all the feed that can be grown at home, plus all that can be imported, plus efficient use of all feeds to meet needs for 1943-44.